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WITCHCRAFT IN CAPACUARO

754 As is often the case, more specific details of witchcraft were secured in Capacuaro, which has no reputation for witchcraft, than in Cherán. In the course of a brief stay in Capacuaro, Rendón and Carrasco made the acquaintance of a delightful couple who openly admitted to being witches. The remaining members of the staff subsequently became fairly well acquainted with the couple. Their witchcraft seemed, on the whole, a relatively harmless and unmalicious variety, which may account for their willingness to admit to the practice. Per-
754 haps the most entertaining incident was when
832 the wife told Rendón under promise of secrecy that she had secured her husband through witchcraft and had been able to keep him only through the same means. The husband told Carrasco the same story about his wife!

The following are details, mostly collected by Rendón:

1. Method of winning the love of someone; of making a wife return to her husband; or of making a husband return to his wife; or causing someone who is impassioned without hope to obtain what he desires:

Secure five candles costing 5 centavos, three of paraffin and two of tallow. The practitioner must shut himself in a room without anyone seeing him, but if he has asked a witch to do the ceremony for him, he must be present. The candles are arranged in the following form:

•	tallow candle
• • •	paraffin candles
•	tallow candle

The paraffin candle in the center is known as the "Candle of the Heart." The candles must be in the center of the room and oriented to the cardinal directions.

Placing of the candles begins with the lower tallow candle. First the candle is turned between the fingers in a certain way, saying "so and so, come, come, come, come, come . . . " many times. Upon saying this the necessary number of times depends much of the success of the ceremony, but there are no rules; the witch simply feels when it has been enough. The candle is then lighted and put in position. The same is done with the other candles, but the order could not be given unless the investigator had hired the ceremony performed with serious purpose.

The center candle, the "Candle of the heart," is previously softened by exposure to the sunlight. Two fingers are then measured on the candle from the base

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754 "for your guardian angel, two fingers for the Holy
●832 Spirit, and one finger for your name." At the point reached by the five fingers measurement, the candle is opened and a flower called the "flower of thought" is placed inside, and the wax is replaced carefully as though the candle had not been opened.

The center candle is now lighted at the butt end and placed in position upside down. Great care must be exercised, however, not to permit the candle to burn past the point where the flower is located. If it did, the bewitched person would die and the person performing the incantation would go to the inferno and suffer throughout eternity.

This ceremony may be performed in any position of the moon and by either day or night. Nevertheless, Wednesday is the best day, and night is the best time. The indispensable prerequisite is that no one see the ceremony except the person on whose behalf it is performed. Any other person, even though equally interested in the success of the procedure, would interfere with the result, while a hostile person who knew, could intercept the "labor" and even do injury to the witch.

Despite this prohibition in ordinary cases, there are some circumstances in which several witches or women "initiated in remedies," even though they did not know how to officiate, might perform this ceremony together. The informant, however, refused to tell how the ceremony was performed in this case or the object of the ceremony.

After the ceremony has been performed, the subject is observed for several days or a week. If no improvement in attitude is noticeable, the bewitchment continues in the following form:

Candles are burned again as described above. In addition, the witch procures a meter of black belting material, a small stamp of Saint Judas, a bit of red paper, "flowers of thought," dahlias or other red flowers, and a collection of as many kinds of flowers as can be found. The Saint Judas is wrapped carefully and thoroughly in the black belt. The bundle is then wrapped in the red paper and laid on a cross made of the miscellaneous flowers at the "head" of the candles with the saint's face down. On the bundle is placed the red flower and the "flowers of thought." Then the witch says, "Saint Judas, bring me so and so, for I have you there prisoner and if you do not hurry I will burn you." A "prayer" is then said in Tarascan which the informant refused to divulge. The witch remains in a kneeling position and recites seven credos until the "Candle of the Heart" reaches the point past which it must not burn. (In order to have the candles burn an equal amount, it is necessary to put out the others when they reach the same level.)

754 2. To make someone hate another person; to make a husband leave his wife or a wife leave her husband; to make children desert their parents or parents abandon their children; to make a person feel repulsion for others:

754 The witch or the person who wishes to accomplish the result secures excrement of the person who is to be hated. The excrement is dried in the sun from 12 until 3, being careful not to expose it at other hours. When dry, the excrement is ground to a powder. Each day at sundown a little of the powder is burned and clothing of the person who is to hate the other is passed through the smoke. Thus a witch who wished another woman's husband secured some of the woman's excrement and passed a pair of trousers and shirt of the man through the smoke. The very next day the man left his wife and came to live with the witch (and is now her husband). The deserted wife immediately went with another man and her first husband "danced with pleasure." [832]

3. To make mischief so that something goes badly with a person—so that his animals will die, so his harvest will fail, so he will fall in jail, so he and all his family will weaken and catch diseases:

Take about a quarter-liter bottle of alcohol. Mix this with earth taken from a spot where there was a quarrel to the death, or where someone had an accident and died, or where there is a burial of a person who did not die in Christian fashion, or from the illegal grave of some recently born child whose parents did not notify the authorities and buried it surreptitiously. If no serious injury is to be caused it will be sufficient to take earth where there has been a quarrel and bloodshed, even though there was no death. This earth, after mixing with alcohol, is allowed to dry thoroughly and is kept in a bottle until it is needed. When the opportunity offers, a little of the earth is sprinkled on the back of the person it is desired to injure, at the same time saying in one's mind the kind of injury one wishes will occur.

4. To cause suppurating sores on the genitals of a person one hates:

Buy oil for lamps and let it burn several days before a holy image. Take what is left and mix it with a bit of earth recently stepped on by the person it is desired to injure, or put in the oil something of the victim, such as hair, fingernails, or some piece of used clothing, and burn the oil, saying "So and so, you must have sores on such and such a part of the body." In addition, if the person is a man, he must be given a glass of *aguardiente* in which an herb from the hot country has infused a number of days; and if the person is a woman, a *gorda* made from maize dough or nixtamal in which the same herb is mixed. (The informant refused to name the herb, claiming she identified it only by sight when the herb sellers came around.)

754 832 5. So that a man or woman will "become tame" and do what one wishes, including making a husband permit his wife sexual relations with another man or a wife permit her husband

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754 sexual relations with another woman, and, in addition, aiding the adulterers to meet:
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Buy a new small pottery vessel (*olita*); it is best to buy it direct from the kiln to make sure it has not been used for anything else. Fill the vessel with holy water, first fastening a new 20 centavo piece to the bottom, inside, with campeche wax. Into the water put a large paraffin candle which has been cut into many small pieces. Each piece represents part of the strength (*fuerza*) of the individual while the holy water signifies that the strength is broken. In order that the results will be "good," put in a piece of cane from the mountains known as *otate del leon* and a very resinous splinter of pitch pine. Then cover the top of the vessel with a thick cap of campeche wax so that no air may enter. The vessel is then buried beneath the spot where the person to be bewitched sleeps, if this person is a spouse. If not, the vessel is buried in the patio of the house of the person.

6. To make a man lose his sexual vigor so that he will recover it only with the woman who has had the magic done:

[824] The witch must first seek a small grass known as *pito de toro* and place it in *aguardiente* to infuse. The man should drink a little of this *aguardiente* every day for 8 days. If he is not a drinking man, then it must be given in coffee or atole or in some other manner so that he will not be aware that he is being given something. After 8 days the woman spies on the man until he goes to urinate, when she must recover a bit of the moist earth or, if he has not urinated on the earth, place earth in the receptacle. The urine-moistened earth is placed inside a *chile ancho* of the largest size it is possible to secure. The *chile* is then sewed up with needle and thread so none of the earth can escape and placed below the spot where the man sleeps with someone, or, if he is unmarried, it is buried in his patio as close as possible to the place where he sleeps. With this, the man remains incapacitated from having sexual relations with any woman except the one who has performed the rite.

754 7. To make a person suffer so that he will be sad and feel sick, although it will be imagination and not in reality; so that he will feel he is going to die; so that everything is revolting; and so that he will be unable to find tranquillity at any moment because it will seem something is about to happen:

Make a small doll resembling the human figure out of campeche wax and clothing used by the person. It is important that the clothing used should not have been washed, but be soiled from wearing. When the doll is made, stick pins in it all along the part of the spinal column, one in the crown of the head, two in the temples, two in the throat on each side, two in the nape of the neck, two in the umbilicus, and seven on the

754 breast (in an arrangement the informant did not wish to explain). Now place the doll in a cooking pot with oil for lamps. In front of the figure put a tallow candle and burn it but not down to the point the flame touches the oil.

754 In addition to the above methods of bewitch-
892 ment, powders brought from the region of the ocean are extensively used for love potions. The powders are brought by muleteers from the hot country and are said to be made by grinding a tree which grows there. A pinch of these is taken between thumb and forefinger and rubbed on the clothing, face, or hair of the desired person without his knowledge.

754 Methods of prevention and cure against
751 witchcraft were also provided by the same informant. The following method will immunize a person against witchcraft and also cure certain types of sorcery:

[278] Materials needed are oil from a certain poisonous snake, grease from a certain species of scorpion, oil of San Ignacio, oil of Vicente, oil of San Aparicio, a little dry marihuana, and small balls of two herbs sold by the herb vendors at Uruapan. The marihuana and the balls are ground and then carefully mixed with the oils and greases. The witch then anoints the patient's body with the mixture.

754 A person ill of sores (*granos*) may be cured
755 by catching certain poisonous snakes, killing them, taking out the oil, and placing the flesh to dry. The flesh, when dry, is reduced to a powder and mixed with the oil. The genital organs of the patient are then anointed with the mixture until he has recovered.

Marihuana and toloache (*Datura*, sp.?) made into a powder and dissolved in *aguardiente* serves to cure witchcraft, taking a little every morning. Marihuana also aids one to "dream beautifully."

To clean someone who is dying of witchcraft, take fresh toloache, jediondilla (unidentified), an egg, and *jara* (cistus or rockrose). Mixing all this together, clean the patient's body, repeating the cure as many times as is necessary and not permitting him to go outside in the air. It is also possible to cure without breaking the egg, but passing it entire over the whole body. (Probably there is more to the latter method than was told.)

754 A few general points appear from the data on witchcraft. It is interesting to note that in most of the important "recipes" the informant